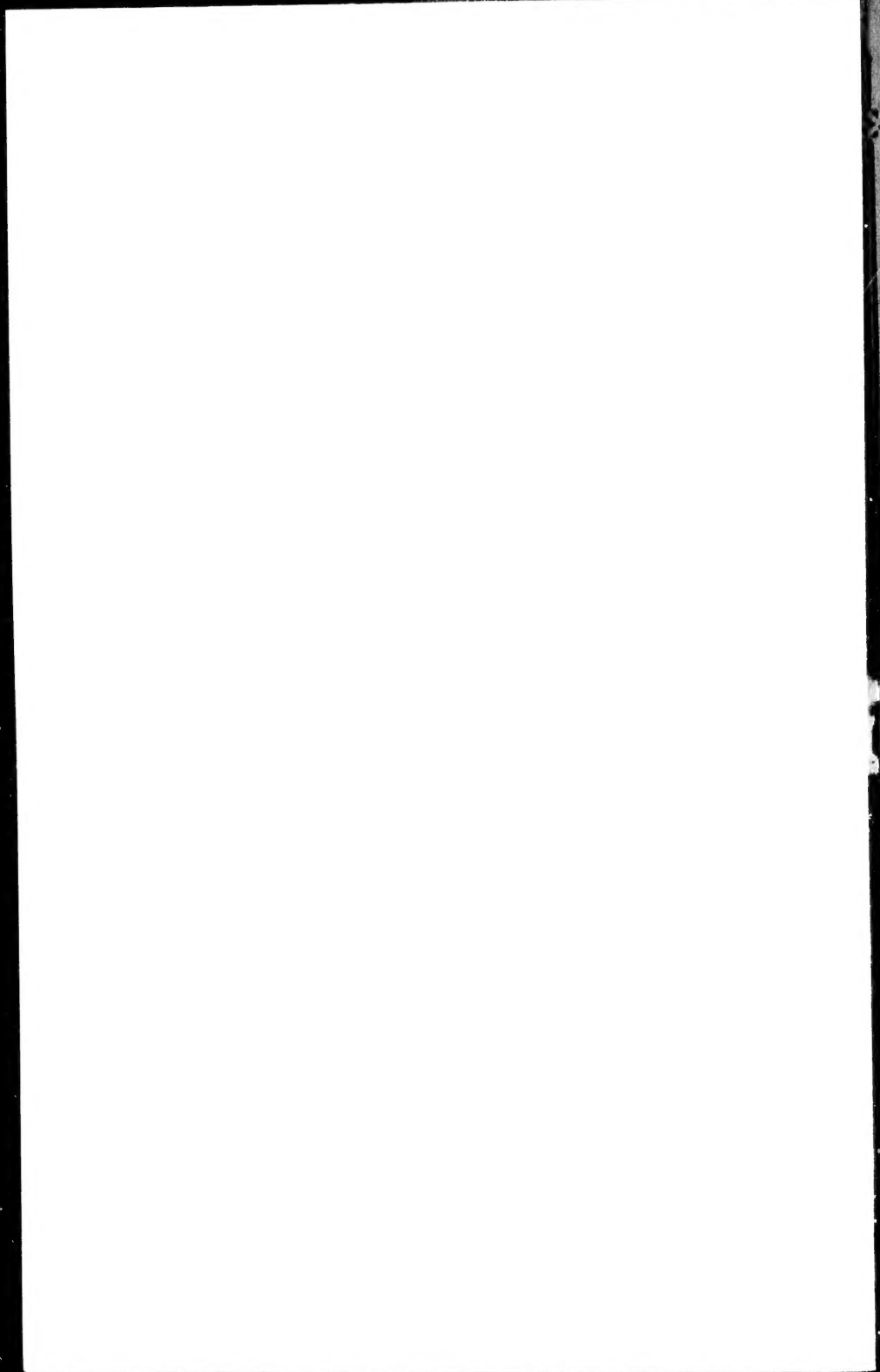




TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

THE
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.



TORONTO
BELFORD BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

1876

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,

WITH

DISRAELI ANECDOTES NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

BY

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN,

(Of the Middle Temple, London, and of Osgoode Hall, Toronto,)

BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

Why that's some comfort to an author's fears,
If he's an ass, he will be try'd by's peers."

(Epilogue to "Old Bachelor.")

TORONTO, ONT.: SYDNEY, N.S.W.:
BELFORD BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE ADMIRERS OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI IN CANADA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has struck me that the present moment is an opportune one for placing, in a portable form, before the public, a portrait of one of the three great men of the Imperial House of Commons, as it has been known to the present generation. My opinion of the Earl of Beaconsfield was formed from personal observation during four years' constant attendance in the gallery of the House of Commons. Like all great men, Mr. Disraeli was, and I hope is, full of humanity. He is a striking instance of the difference between a great man who is also a brilliant writer, and a brilliant writer who is not a great man.

I compare him with Sir John Macdonald, as the comparison has frequently been made. What I say on this head was written and delivered in a speech at the Music Hall, and published in one of the papers before I severed myself from the Editorial staff of the *Toronto Globe*.

The anecdotes are, I think, without exception, new.

DEDICATION.

When I compare Mr. Disraeli with other men, especially with some of his detractors, I feel the full truth of what Plutarch says, that there is not so great a difference between beast and beast as between man and man. When going from human greatness to human littleness, from genius which soars to mediocrity which creeps, from the magnanimous hearted man, like Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli, who would serve his pitiful slanderer, to the miserable snipe who live on the suction of infamy and falsehood—we seem to traverse the whole abyss which separates the worm from the God. If it is depressing to contemplate the wriggling of human worms, it is elevating and bracing to dwell on the career of a man like the Earl of Beaconsfield—not in deed great after the stoic fashion. No; but human with human weaknesses, and yet

Fortis, et in seipso totus teres atque rotundus.

I am, your obedient servant,

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN

TORONTO, August 14, 1876.

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THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

ON Saturday the 12th August, 1876, was published a piece of news which added new interest to the most interesting character, not only in English politics, but in English life; which may have a momentous influence on the management of the House of Commons; which of necessity makes the mind go back over the various stages of a great career; and, as the purple glory of the declining day, while surpassing the splendours of noon suggests as near at hand, the darkness and the chill, the cold dews and the cold unchanging stars, so do the coronet and the robes remind us of another inevitable pageant, when the requiem will swell with mournful cadence through the storied aisles of the Abbey, and all that is mortal of Benjamin Disraeli be laid in the great Pantheon of the Empire. That Mr. Disraeli should decide to go to the House of Lords proves that he considers his career near its close. There were not wanting signs that his power was failing, though he could flash forth in an occasional speech with all the old brilliancy, the old happiness of phrase, the old biting, arrowy sarcasm, feathered with laughter. Long may he be pointed out to the visitor to the House of Lords as the most remarkable English politician of the nineteenth century.

His career has the completeness of a drama, and falls naturally into five acts; the fifth begins with his elevation to the peerage; the first with the publication of "Vivian Grey." In the first act he is a literary man, dreaming of greatness, and showing the sort of greatness he coveted—to win fame and power by his genius; to dazzle and delight the world by his wit. He would enter the House of Commons, be Prime Minister, wear a coronet; in fact do all he has done.

"Mankind then," says Vivian Grey, "is my great game. At this moment how many a powerful noble only wants wit to be a Minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end? That noble's influence. When two people can so materially assist each other, why are they not brought together? Shall I, because my birth baulks my fancy, pass my life a moping misanthrope in an old chateau? Now let me probe myself. Does my cheek blanch? I have the mind for the conception, and I can perform right skilfully upon the most splendid of musical instruments—the human voice—to make others believe those conceptions. There wants but one thing—pure, perfect courage; and does Vivian Grey know fear? He laughed an answer of the bitterest derision."

Yet nothing was more unlikely than that he should achieve those things of which he talked so flippantly. His very name then written with an apostrophe between the "D" and "I" seemed to proscribe him. His father, nay the great body of literature which the world owes to

and falls men of his blood, whence genius has borrowed purer fires,
with his and where the afflicted and sorrowful of a hundred races
publication have found diviner waters of healing and consolation than
any man, any Abana or any Pharpar of their own—memories, near
greatness and remote alike, would justify him in looking to the
genius; to highest peaks of literary success. But that at a time
ould enter prior to the Reform Bill of '32, a man of alien blood and
coronet; plebeian birth should aspire to all the younger Disraeli
aspired to, must have seemed the most foppish thing in
his consummately foppish get-up. To do all he hoped, he
eat game. would have to get into Parliament, to attain a position of
nly wants influence in the House of Commons, to elbow aside
Grey to ambitious members of the great houses, win the confidence
When two of the country. He visited Lady Blessington, who tells
y are they us he "was quite the character of Vivian Grey, full of
th baulks genius and eloquence, with extreme good nature and
in an old perfect frankness of character." He was very much
my cheek embroidered and bejewelled, and oiled and curled, like an
and I can Assyrian bull,

"Smelling of musk and of insolence."

rs believe Having published several other novels, some of them
ng—pure, being no better than "Vivian Grey" diluted, he set out
fear? He to travel in the East. On his return in 1831 he in vain
contested the borough of Wycombe, and thus with a
he should failure commenced the second act in his life drama of a
flippantly. man who has twice left it on record, once when he made
e between his first speech in the House of Commons and failed, next
His father, when at the summit of renown he addressed the students
ld owes to at Glasgow, that the secret of his success was that with

him to fail has ever been to try again and yet again, if necessary, until he succeeded. The proof of man lies in the reproof of circumstance; and as a good mechanic never complains of his tools, a great man never whines over his disadvantages, but with a calm, invincible will, sets about creating the opportunity which has not been thrust upon him. When your horse is killed you must, like Pierre Farnese, mount a mule and win the victory. On his first appearance as a candidate for Parliament he was a radical indorsed by Mr. Hume and Sir E. L. Bulwer (the late Lord Lytton.) He ran again and was defeated. Earl Grey, a relative of whom he was opposing, asked "who is he?" and Mr. Disraeli hearing this published a violent political pamphlet so entitled, which was followed by another—"The Crisis Examined." He had applied in vain to O'Connell for his name, and when in 1835 contesting Taunton as a Conservative denounced O'Connell as a "bloody traitor" which drew from the Liberator the taunt that "this Disraeli" was the lineal descendant of the impenitent thief. The fiery young Christian Hebrew challenged Morgan O'Connell, son of the great Irish Tribune, who had determined after he had shot D'Esterre, never to fight another duel. The challenge was not accepted, and Mr. Disraeli wrote some letters almost boyish in their vehemence, in the last of which he closed by telling O'Connell that they would meet at Philippi, where he would castigate the man who had lavished insults upon him. He did his best two years later,

again, if when he was elected for Maidstone, to carry out his threat
an lies in in his first speech.

The third act opens with his entrance into Parliament, for the borough of Maidstone, as the colleague of his friend Mr. Wyndham Lewis. As is often the case, the third act is by far the most interesting and stirring in the play. We have a marriage and a great battle, an ignominious failure, and an unparalleled success; we see old allegiances scattered to the winds, the dearest friends become the bitterest enemies, men who loved each other as Jonathan and David, as Burke and Fox, drawn up in hostile camps, and challenges of hatred replacing greetings of love. Mr. Disraeli's first speech was a failure. But there is a vulgar impression regarding it which is quite contrary to the facts. I have met great numbers of persons who think the House of Commons refused to listen to him, and that after uttering a few remarks he sat down with the well known utterance of prophetic confidence that the time would come when they would hear him. The real circumstances do not bear out this view. Mr. Disraeli spoke for as long as most new members speak, before he was coughed down. The reason he was coughed down was no doubt partly due to his foppish and bombastic manner and style, but also to the fact that though a new member, he had long been before the public, and after a little decent show of patience the House felt at liberty to deal with him as if had been an old offender. He protested by the lesson, and endeavoured by making short speeches to catch the tone which suited the House.

Meanwhile Wyndham Lewis died. Mr. Disraeli attended the funeral, and soon after married the widow. She had a large fortune, and this as well as her personal character had a good influence on our hero's destinies. She was one of those who though not great themselves can recognize greatness in others. In the dedication to one of his novels he calls her "a perfect wife," and he repaid her devotion by a respect and attention which never flagged, though she was ten years his senior. When genius is struggling to obtain acknowledgement, sweet, and never to be forgotten, is the sympathy of the woman who, while giving assurance that too lofty an aim has not been cherished, inspires with a new courage and imparts a fresh strength. His wife made Disraeli. It was she interested her first husband in him, and so he was elected for Maidstone, and perhaps nothing was more natural than that gratitude should ripen into a tenderer feeling. He never forgot what he owed her. Long after Katinka, Mahomet's first wife, was dead, the queen of his overstocked harem asked the prophet whether he did not love her more than Katinka, who was a widow of forty when he first knew her. "By Allah! No!" was the reply, "I love her best, for she beleived in me when no one else did." Mrs. Lewis believed in the future Prime Minister when no one else did, when Sir Robert Peel did not think him worth a small Under Secretaryship, and when Sir George Bentinck could patronize a man who was destined to make Dukes and create an Empress.

Disraeli at the widow. Mrs. Disraeli became Viscountess Beaconsfield in 1868, and died in 1873.

personal destinies. "What is this fatality that men worship?" asks Mr. Disraeli in "Coningsby." "Is it a goddess? Unquestionably it is a power that acts mainly by female agents. Women are the priestesses of Predestination. Man conceives fortune, but Woman conducts it. It is the spirit of man that says 'I will be great;' but it is the sympathy of woman that usually makes him so."

During the years immediately succeeding his marriage he published a remarkable series of political novels, "Coningsby" creating as great a sensation in 1844 as "Vivian Grey" in 1826, or as, if we may peep into the fourth act, "Lothair" did in 1870. He delivered several very able speeches in the House of Commons, notably in 1843 on the state of Ireland, but had made little way with the party to which he had attached himself, the leading men, especially Sir Robert Peel, looking askance at him. But when the disruption took place in the Conservative ranks on the question of Protection his opportunity had come. He allied himself with the Protectionist wing, became its spokesman, and his foot was on the ladder. Now Sir Robert Peel had reason to repent that he was so locked up in himself as not to know he had in the midst of his party a great man. Night after night Mr. Disraeli came down and hurled his venomous shafts into the great Minister, who winced as the arrows went quivering home, amid mocking cheers and triumphant laughter

If any one wants to see how like Jove's lightning in its twin characteristics of destructiveness and brilliancy Mr. Disraeli's wit is, let him read those speeches attacking Sir Robert Peel. This is the storehouse from which most of the scathing parliamentary points for thirty years have been borrowed. The eagle has been transfixed by darts impelled by feathers from his own wing; and from the *debris* of that great fight a dozen warriors have furnished their armory. Mr. Osborne has been there for jokes, and the Marquis of Salisbury has not scorned to pick thence stray sarcasms. Sir Robert Peel was so irritated on the night of the third reading of the Corn-law bill that he went after the debate to Lord Lincoln and insisted on his carrying a challenge to Mr. Disraeli.* Lord Lincoln re-

*While these pages were passing through the press, the statement in the text was questioned by a correspondent of one of the Toronto papers. The correspondent gave his authority as Lord Lincoln, and the following is his account:—

" Lord George Bentinck it was who, by one of his onslaughts, succeeded in causing Peel for a moment to lose his balance, and whom Peel wanted to call to account after the fashion of a generation which had passed away. * * * He touched Peel in a very sensitive point when he spoke of the Conservatives who had been faithful to their leader against the mass of the party as 'Janissaries,' actuated by mercenary or low motives. This taunt it was, levelled not so much against Peel himself as against the friends who had remained true to him, that stung him to the point of determining to send a challenge. When the House was up, Peel called to him, Lord Lincoln (better known to Canada by his subsequent title as the Duke of Newcastle) and asked him to wait while he wrote a letter to the Queen. The letter having been despatched, Peel and the Duke walked together towards Peel's house in Whitehall Gardens, and on the way Peel told the Duke that he was determined to send a challenge to Lord George Bentinck and

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tused, and Sir Robert Peel was only driven from his purpose by the threat of an application to a magistrate. You know how hard you have hit by the rebound. After Peel's death Mr. Disraeli showed for some time a want of spirit

that he wished the Duke to be the bearer of it. The Duke, of course, protested; Peel insisted, and the two walked up and down before Peel's gate arguing the question till the day dawned and the work-people began to pass on their way to work. Peel then consented to go in and take some rest, the Duke promising to return after a few hours and Peel promising to take no step in the meantime. The Duke returned after a few hours accordingly, and found Peel still bent on sending the challenge, and resolved if the Duke would not carry it for him to apply to Sir Henry Harding. The Duke renewed his arguments and entreaties. At last Peel yielded, not to the threat of an application to a magistrate, which could never have entered the Duke's mind, but to a representation of the pain which a duel would cause the Queen."

Lord Lincoln's authority is, of course, decisive, and henceforth, the version which has obtained for thirty years, and which appeared in a book published only the other day, and written by a man whose opportunities of knowing the facts, were and are unrivalled, must be held to be discredited. That the threat of an application to a magistrate "could never have entered the Duke's mind," is far from certain, as such threats were not uncommon on like occasions, in the declining days of the duel. At a period before duelling had lost its hold as an institution, Henry Grattan, as proud a man as Peel, wanted to challenge Giffard. He was prevented doing so only by a similar menace. The two cases furnish a parallel. Grattan wanted Sir Jonah Barrington to bear a challenge from him to Giffard, and it was with the greatest difficulty he was persuaded to go home and give no more thought to Giffard's insults. The next morning he returned and said he was thinking about "that rascal" the whole night and "must have a shot at him." He seemed determined to get some one else to act for him if Barrington refused, and Barrington then assured him, that if he proceeded with his determination, the Sheriff would be asked to bind him over to keep the peace. "*Personal Sketches of his own Times*," Sir John Barrington—Fifth Edition—pp. 213-14.

and freshness. Shiel used to account for this by comparing him to a dissecting surgeon without a corpse.

On the death of Lord George Bentinck he became the leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, and in 1852, being then forty-seven years of age, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Conservative Ministry of Lord Derby. He was again Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1858 and again in 1866. In February, 1868, Lord Derby resigned, and Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister. In 1873 he refused to form a ministry on Mr. Gladstone's resigning, and in the contest of 1874, brought about by an impulsive dissolution of Mr. Gladstone, he received an overwhelming majority, and has ever since been at the head of a very strong Government. As a leading man of ministerial rank he has played his part greatly in all respects.

The fifth act takes him to the painted chamber, and henceforth the House in which he has sat for forty years will know him no more. The greatest epigrammatist and one of the greatest jesters who ever sat in that assembly, will be missed from the centre of the front ministerial or opposition bench as the case might be. Who is to supply his place? I confess I see no one on the ministerial side capable of meeting, I will not say Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright, but Mr. Lowe. To oppose Sir Stafford Northcote to Mr. Lowe and his great colleagues is like throwing a Christian to the lions. There is indeed one young Conservative whose genius may now

force itself to the front—Mr. Plunkett, the member for Dublin University. However, my object is not to discuss the probable effect on the state of parties and the dynamics of debate, which will be produced by such a hiatus as Mr. Disraeli's departure to the Lords will leave behind him, and if referred to at all it is by way of pointing in an emphatic manner his transcendent gifts.

He is not a great orator as the word is usually understood. He wants spontaneous passion. His manner has defects. He compels attention by his wit. Making a statement or pronouncing a eulogy his literary instinct enables him to reach the acme of felicity. But when he discusses some abstruse political issue, or seeks to marshal a series of facts, it is easy to see that there is something wanting, especially when a comparison is made with Mr. Gladstone's extraordinary powers in these respects. But when he attacks, every two minutes his wit explodes and the deadly missile goes home. In attacking a policy or a man, his weapons are travesty, exaggeration, epigram, and solemn chaff. Thus, when speaking in the Town Hall at Birmingham, February, 1874, he regretted the loss of nomination days because it was hard on the "characters" in a constituency. For instance—"The county wit who has had seven years to prepare his jokes—it is hard upon him that he should lose his opportunity of visiting his sharp sayings upon his representative's head." When attacking Mr. Lowe and the Ashantee policy of the Government in 1873, he contrasted his own

conduct in abstaining from embarrassing the Government in the early stages of that little war, with Mr. Lowe unseemly demeanour on the eve of the Abyssinian campaign—"Mr. Lowe rose in Parliament and violently attacked the Government of the day for the absurdity and the folly, the extreme imprudence, of attempting an interference in the affairs of Abyssinia. He described not merely the fatal influences of the climate, but I remember *he described one pink fly which he said would eat up all the British army. He was as vituperative of the insect of Abyssinia as if he had been a British workman.*"* Whether he breaks a professorial fly on the wheel, or snubs Jenkins too impatient for information, or compliments Darby Griffiths on his "luminous mind," or advances sword in hand against a Salisbury, or meets the onslaught of the Manchester Ajax, or the rush of the Liberal Achilles, his weapons are ever the same, in defence and in assault—wit in one or other of its forms.

The following is a good specimen of Mr. Disraeli's jibing manner; it is a good specimen because it shows how bold and even reckless he can be.

In a speech delivered at Newport Pagnell, in February 1874, he thus pays off Mr. Lowe for an attack, bitter enough to have delighted Mr. Disraeli's greatest enemy, a distinguished literary man who has made his home among ourselves. Mr. Lowe had said that the country was agitated

*During the debates on the Reform Bills of 1866 and 1867, Mr. Lowe had violently assailed the character of the working classes.

Government in order that the government might be given into the hands of Mr. Disraeli, who would not believe—so he says—for a moment that the country would exhibit the excitement which now prevails, to make him a minister: “but I think it quite possible that the country might show this excitement in order to get rid of Mr. Lowe. No man,” he goes on, “has dragged down the government of Mr. Gladstone as Mr. Lowe has done,” and then he tells how he had a conversation with Prince Bismarck, when the German statesman was about to become prime minister of Prussia, and the Prince said, “‘Mr. Disraeli what I want to do particularly is to get rid of those professors in my country, I want to save Prussia from professors.’ Now Mr. Lowe is a professor. He has confidence in his own individual intelligence, and has offended the nation which can have no sympathy for a man who is proud of having no heart. He is a most ungrateful man, for he would never be in parliament but for me; but I, with characteristic magnanimity, have a member to the university of London especially to provide for Mr. Lowe. It was then impossible for him, and perhaps still is, to show himself on any hustings with safety to his life. I said to myself—‘there is so much public life lost to England’—and I said further, because one must have an eye to the main chance, ‘if I keep Mr. Lowe in public life, and this is his only chance, I make sure that the cabinet of which he is a member, even if brought into power by an overwhelming majority, can long endure and long flourish.’” All these points are hailed with much

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laughter, and Mr. Disraeli, clinching the whole, added, "and gentlemen, I think what took place justified my presence." In the same speech he gives a travesty of Mr. Gladstone's economy, which is equally good. Mr. Gladstone had said there were four points to which he wanted an answer from Mr. Disraeli, and of course he (Mr. Disraeli) was there to give it. "Mr. Gladstone," he says, "has always a number of points. There were three points in the Alabama negotiations, and each of them cost more than a million of money. That is rather a large sum, but it is a very large sum indeed for a minister of economy. And then he compares Mr. Gladstone to a traveller who should involve his employers in entangling engagements and who, when reproved, should say: 'I am sorry for this and it will be a lesson in the future. But I can assure you I have been most economical in my personal expenses. I have always travelled second-class, and as far as my refreshment on the road is concerned, I have taken the temperance pledge.'"

When Mr. Gladstone brought in his Irish Church Disestablishment Bill, one of the points made against it by Mr. Disraeli, is a fine instance of audaciously solemn chaff. He said the principle of the measure was, confiscation without a pretext, and that it would lead to perplexing demands from a certain class of Irish gentlemen. There were, he said, Irish gentlemen who had large estates and broad acres. There were other Irish gentlemen who were entirely without estates, clever, well educated gentlemen

whole, add when they were, the most delightful companions in the world. These would one morning after the disestablishment bill became law, wait on the Prime Minister, and say:

Mr. Gladstone. We find ourselves in an unpleasant position. We are the subjects of a cruel grievance. We know the spirit of this age, that it abhors inequality. Now we find that we are at a disadvantage as regards some of our habitual companions who have vast properties and large revenues. We are as well born as they are. We meet in the same hunting field. We drink the same claret at dinner. We are in point of culture and education, no whit inferior to them. We ask you therefore in accordance with the precedent of the church measure and the spirit of the age to disestablish and disendow those Irish gentlemen who have large estates, and let us all, like the Roman Catholic Church live on voluntary contributions."

This is very daring. There is a levity about it when we think of the magnitude of the measure, but it is the levity of a giant.

On the night on which Mr. Disraeli's Government was beaten on the preliminary issue to the disestablishment measure the Prime Minister, who had during the evening been drinking bitter beer with the Prince of Wales, rose at half past ten. The scene was one calculated to leave a lasting impression on any man's mind. The house was crowded; the crisis had come; the fate of the Government and the fate of the Irish Church, both depended on the division that would be taken that night. Royal

Princes, amongst whom the fine presence of Prince Christain is remarkable, and leading peers, amongst whom are Earl Granville, Lord Cairns and the Duke of Richmond, occupy seats over the clock. The speakers gallery behind them was filled with all that was most distinguished in art, and letters, and science, in London; there was the dark countenance with its Curran eye of Huxley; there the handsome head of Millais; there the keen Irish features of Professor Tyndal; the poet laureate had come up from the Isle of Wight to watch the concluding scene; Robert Browning had for one night thrown poetised metaphysics to the dogs; Tenniel was there thinking of his forthcoming cartoon; Sir Roderick Murchison had left his bottle and his books; Landseer, the Shakespeare of the world of dogs, his palette and his dumb friends. Under the clock on the floor of the house, on the Ministerial side, were the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, and on the other side, the Chief Justice of England and the Bishop of Oxford. The press gallery was crammed with editors, and above from the brazen cage wherein it was said her Majesty sat, and where certainly Mrs. Disraeli and Mrs. Gladstone were, came the flutter and whisper of the beauty and rank of England. The prozers prose; the bores bore; the twaddlers twaddle; but we wait, and Mr. Disraeli waits, sitting with an air of prostration, the face like that of a sphinx, who had watched the expeditions of Livingstone, with the same unconcern, as the triumphs of Roman arms. At

of Prince of Wales, as soon as some member has taken the seat he should never
ngst whom have left, and Mr. Disraeli springs to his feet, every
e of Rich line of his figure tremulous with suppressed passion,
ers gallery and, now while he feels nervously the despatch box, he
distinguish deals with the amendment—having a special eye to
there was the objections which had come from Lord Cranborne on
f Huxley his own side of the house. He defends it by quoting Sir
keen Irish Robert Peel's dictum, amid cheers, and laughter "that
e had come you should never express your policy in an amendment."
ing scene; "The noble Lord saw in this amendment of which I
a poetised have given the House the plain history—" Here
thinking of there is laughter at Mr. Disraeli's simulation of extreme
on had left candour and simplicity, and he replies to it with a com-
espeare of promise between positiveness and artificial indignation—
b friends. "I say the plain and true history. The noble lord saw
the Min in the language of the amendment great cause for mistrust
the Duke and want of confidence," (and that noble lord is now
Justice of leaning forward to catch every word—and receive so to
ess gallery say, the shots full on his breast.) "I do not quarrel"—
he brazen Mr. Disraeli goes on—"with the invective of the noble
nd where lord. The noble lord is a man of great talent, and there
ere, came is vigour in his invective and no want of vindictiveness.
England. But speaking as a critic—and perhaps not an impartial
twaddlers one—I must say I think it wants finish." Here there is
tting with laughter; but he has only crossed swords before closing
inx, who with his antagonist, and now mark how every word stings
with the and stabs. "Considering that the noble lord has studied
rms. At the subject, and that he has written anonymous articles

against me, before and since I was his colleague—I do not know whether he wrote them when I was his colleague—I think it might have been accomplished more *ad unguem*. The only objection I have to the attacks of the noble lord is that they invariably produce an echo from the other side. That it seems to me is now almost a parliamentary law. When the bark is heard on this side the right honourable member for Calne (Mr. Lowe), emerges, I will not say from his cave,* but from a more cynical habitation. He joins immediately in the chorus of reciprocal malignity,

‘And hails with horrid melody the moon.’”

He then proceeded for hours; became quite irrelevant; got decidedly mixed; and at last the house began to cry “question,” a rare thing when a prime minister is speaking. The moment that cry reached him he drew himself up, and shot into his peroration, in which he spoke of a combination between High Church ritualists and Irish followers of the Pope, at the head of which he hinted stood Mr. Gladstone, a combination almost superhuman in its powers. They had their hands on the realm of England. But he would oppose their machinations, “for I believe,” he said, “the policy of the Right Honorable Gentleman who is their representative, will, if successful, change the character of this country; deprive the subjects of her Majesty of some of their most precious privileges, and dangerously

*Mr. Lowe was one of the leaders of the little party of malcontents who wrecked Lord Russell's Reform Bill in 1866. Mr. Bright called the little split the “Cave of Adullam”—a “more cynical habitation” would, I suppose, be the “tub” of Diogenes.

ague—I do not touch even the tenure of the crown." As he said these last words he glanced towards the Prince of Wales, who turned with a start to the Duke of Cambridge.

It was indeed a reckless peroration. Royal princes do not like to hear that the crown can easily be placed in jeopardy.

Mr. Gladstone started to his feet, and with his head a little on one side, his face at its saddest, and his voice having its deepest and hollowest roll, and the hands holding the collar of his coat, and the Lancashire brogue more than usually apparent, said—"Mr. Speaker: Sir, I cannot help making the observation, and I trust it is one at least as much within the bounds of parliamentary courtesy as some to which we have recently listened, that there are portions of the discursive speech of the Right Honourable Gentlemen that after every effort on my part I fail to discern the relevancy, and that there are other portions of it of which it does not seem to me a severe judgment to say that they appear to be due to the influence of an overheated imagination."

Reader, when you visit the House of Lords, look on the face and the lines about the mouth of the Earl of Beaconsfield, and remember his career and you will be conscious you are in the presence of a man with a purpose, on which the blows of difficulty fell like snow on bloom-furnaced iron, one of those sad and solitary natures whose real self is ever alone, who steer their barks through untrodden seas, and who carry within their breasts a divine fortitude, four

square to all the blasts that blow; as careless of choruses of praise as of orchestras of calumny; you see the remains of a man of indomitable will, who, despite a fantastic imagination, alien blood, plebeian birth, has led the aristocracy of England and climbed to the position he told Lady Blessington he meant to gain, when nobody saw much in him, beyond an untamed fancy, loud foppishness and saucy wit. Have you ever reflected what a triumph of genius his position is? Remember it has been snatched from bold and able competitors; has been held in spite of jealousy and intrigue. Never shall I forget seeing that man walk up to the bar of the Lords; put up his eye-glasses and beckon dukes to do his bidding. And why is all this? There's not another cause but that he is a man of great wit and great will. Will without wit is the bow without the arrow; wit without will, the arrow without the bow. But when they are both combined you have a man who can do anything; whose spirit never droops at failure; is never daunted by difficulties; and who, as he rises superior to the one and scatters the others from before him, cries with Edmund Burke, "*Vitor in adversum*"—I battle with the fates themselves—is the motto for a man like me. I have always been opposed to Mr. Disraeli, but when I remember how huge are the barriers he has overcome, the detraction he has braved, and the envious depreciation he has trampled beneath his feet, with what a mighty energy he has held his purpose, and how he has made all his acts converge on what he meant to be the

crisis of his fate, I cannot but do homage to his career. For could words more suitable for him be found than those which Nicol points the source of Hannibal's power.

"That he has dwelt

In many realms is much; that in his veins
There dwells the lightening of his race is more:
But this the chief that he has one desire.
Of men who rise above the common herd
Of goats and sheep, that butt and breed and die,
The most are clipped in pieces by themselves,
Frittered in flickering fancies, half inclined
To fleet delights, and then with brief resolves,
Taking up languid duties,
And so they dance, like puppets, jerked awry;
Who sets himself one way, and pulls one string,
His will, become a force, compels the world,
And, while the rest stand gazing, he commands.

Strong as he was, that he felt acutely the efforts made by envious incapacity and gilded stupidity, to keep him down there is not wanting evidence in his writings.

"Ah! Tadpole" said Mr. Taper, "I often think if the time should ever come, when you and I should be joint secretaries of the Treasury!"

"We shall see, we shall see" replies Tadpole. "All we have to do is to get into Parliament, work well together, and keep other men down." "We will do our best" said Taper.

Mr. Disraeli always commences very quietly and would seem even dull until presently out jumps a sarcasm or a joke, a quirk or quiddity, which takes the house, and then point follows point in quick succession. Towards the end of his speeches he gets very loud, "but his

loudness is not born of passion, and though eminent in England effective is not effective as passion is effective; is to us we deed purely histrionic; is in entire command of the Thou orator; and can in a moment be exchanged for a whisper. No is equally artistic. His delivery is masterly, passionless. r. Dove finished," and what *Shirley Brooks said of him twenty t and years ago, is true to-day. "Like the warrior to whom d ins Norna chants her witch song, seldom culum

Lies he still through sloth or fear,
When point and edge are glittering near.

An ever ready speaker, nevertheless his premeditated orations, that is to say those on which he has had some ewde time—no matter how short—to ponder, are infinitely beto th ter than those prompted at the moment. Unprepared, he n the has a tendency to verbiage and to a repetition of the ate's. same idea. Prepared and not a blow misses, no platitud eculum irritates; not a sarcasm is impeded by a weakening phrase olemn and the arrow stript of all plumage except that which about aids and steadies its flight," strikes full on the mark of the picu archer's aim. monou

He is now an old man at the head of a great empire, Right and at a time of crisis, when a war-cloud has broken in "to n thunder and fiery hail in the East, and the storm sweeps laugh from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. But in 1830 he was Dow wild with enthusiasm for youthful statesmen and youthful cleve soldiers; in 1848 he was in his element amid cries of lingt young France, young Germany, young Italy and young that mist

*Shirley Brooks in the *Quarterly*.

gh eminent England, cries which made M. Theirs exclaim, "what!
ctive;" is we to be governed by bibs and tuckers?"

Though he can hit so hard he is wary of a real opponent
who is master of his weapons. In the session of 1866
Mr. Dowse, now Mr. Baron Dowse, a man with genuine Irish
t and a genuine Irish brogue, fell into a lapsus linguæ,
and instead of saying "*in secula seculorum*," said, "*in
iculum seculorum*." Bear in mind for a moment that on
the previous evening Mr. Newdegate had made a motion
which Mr. Disraeli entreated him to withdraw, but Mr.
Newdegate pressing a division, his leader went with him
to the lobby although it was well known that his views
on the principle were not in accordance with Mr. Newde-
gate's. When Mr. Dowse sat down, having finished with "*in
iculum seculorum*," Mr. Disraeli rose and in a mock
solemn manner said that not only was Mr. Gladstone
about to destroy their ancient institutions, one of his con-
spicuous followers was now robbing them of a time-
honoured quotation. He had always thought the phrase
an '*in secula seculorum*.' But now he supposed the
Right Honorable Gentlemen intended to bring in a bill
"to revolutionize the Latin Grammar." There was great
laughter. When Mr. Disraeli sat down up rose Mr.
Dowse and said: "the Right Honourable Gentleman is very
clever about what everybody knows was a mere *lapsus
linguæ*. But let me tell the Right Honourable Gentleman
that though he may see on this side of the house a trifling
mistake or a trip of the tongue, such as I fell into—

there is one thing he will never see—what we saw last night on that side—the head follow the tail into the lobby. The laughter and cheers were uproarious and long continued.

Mr. Disraeli never again meddled with Mr. Dowse.

As a leader of a party he stands unrivalled. His good humour, his tact, his wit, his large capacity—these have enabled him on three occasions to lead the House of Commons while he was without a majority, and to lead his party often in part mutinous. He held his great place in the face of bold and able competitors, in spite of jealousy and intrigue; a Derby was mocked into reverence, and Salisbury snubbed into submission. That he is a statesman there can be no question. He passed a great measure of reform, which, while Conservative, went further in extending the franchise than even Mr. Bright would have done. He foresaw the end of the American civil war, when Lord Russell could describe Jefferson Davis as fighting for "independence" against another power fighting for "empire," and Mr. Gladstone declared that he (Mr. Davis) had "made a nation." Mr. Disraeli knew better.

Mr. Frank Hill says it is a perpetual surprise to meet Mr. Disraeli in the long roll of English Prime Ministers. He regards it as a standing joke of history. Why, we fail to see. In that long and illustrious roll it would be easy to find his inferiors, and not easy to fix on greater men. Wait until he has passed through the fifth act and to

we saw late the "beautifier of the dead" has pronounced the
to the lobby al verdict, and men will smile at this flippant way of
and long co missing a great man. In the House of Lords he will
what so many noble persons fail in, make himself
r. Dowse. ard, for he has always spoken to the reporters as well
d. His go to his immediate audience. He will be a figure of
—these ha eat authority there, and will add to the preponderance
ne House talent which that House would seem to possess over
and to lead e House of Commons at present. That preponder-
great place ce cannot long remain unredressed. The need will
e of jealous ll forth the supply. As some one has well said, the
erence, and ritish Houses of Parliament will not moulder like Vene-
e is a state n palaces. But, however great the eloquence which
a great me ay yet be heard where Mr. Disraeli's voice has died
went furthe to an echo; however bright the wit may be which
Bright woul om unborn Parliaments may call forth admiration and
ne America ughter—of this we may be sure, men will look back with
be Jefferso udious wonder and anxious emulation, to the extraordin-
inst another y displays of him, whom we must henceforth know as
tone declar e Earl of Beaconsfield.

Mr. Disraeli He was born in London, No. 16 Bloomsbury square,
r. December 21st, 1805. He is therefore in his seventy-first
rise to mee ar, and is the eldest son of Isaac D'Israeli, the well-
e Ministers own author of the "Curiosities of Literature," the
Why, w holar, the antiquarian, and the dilettante.

it would b Mr. Frank Hill, in his "Political Portraits," says
t on greate hat no one of his novels give us as much insight
fifth act and to Mr. Disraeli's character as the brief memoir of his

father prefixed to the later editions of "Curiosities of Jewish Literature."

"In the short memoir in question, Mr. Disraeli accounts for himself more satisfactorily than any formal autobiography could do. For the purpose of understanding him it is worth all the rest of his works put together. It shows the medium, as naturalists call it, in which he was reared, the influences which acted upon his genius and character, and against which in turn his genius and character reacted. In relating the history of his family, Mr. Disraeli supplies us with the key to his political life."

"In the fifteenth century Mr. Disraeli's ancestors, under a name different from that which they subsequently bore, were settled in Spain, whence, towards the close of that century, they were driven by the persecutions of the Inquisition to seek a refuge in the territories of the Venetian Republic. 'Grateful to the God of Jacob, who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and guarded them through unheard-of perils, they assumed the name of D'Israeli—a name never borne before or since by any other family, in order that their race might be forever recognized.' In 1745 Mr. Disraeli's grandfather, Benjamin D'Israeli, the younger of two brothers, settled in England. Mr. D'Israeli would seem not only to have received his grandfather's name, but to have inherited from him some of his qualities. He is depicted as 'a man of ardent character, sanguine, courageous, speculative, and fortunate; with a temper which no disappointment could

curiosities disturb, and a brain, amid reverses, full of resource.' The immigrant, as his grandson relates, made his fortune, laid out an Italian garden at Enfield, played whist with Sir Horace Mann, 'ate macaroni which was dressed by the Venetian consul,' and sang canzonettas. He had married a daughter of his own race, who, however, 'never pardoned him for his name,' since it identified her with a people of whom she was ashamed, and from whom they kept aloof. As often happens in similar cases, the only son of the enterprising Jewish merchant was the very opposite of his father, a timid recluse, living among his books, simple as Goldsmith, and learned as a grammarian of the Middle Ages. His birth, as his son has pointed out, left him without relations or family acquaintance. 'He not only never entered into the politics of the day, but he could never understand them. He never was connected with any particular body or set of men; comrades of school or college, or confederates in that public life which, in England, is, perhaps, the only foundation of real friendship.'

"Benjamin D'Israeli, the grandfather, who, but for his retirement from business before the era of the revolutionary wars and the great loans, would probably, his descendant thinks, have become a millionaire, died when the future Prime Minister of England was a lad of twelve. Reared in a home of as absolute seclusion from English society as if it had been placed in an island of the Mediterranean, with occasional glimpses, perhaps, at Enfield of a strange society more foreign than English, and more

cosmopolitan than either, the young Disraeli must early have felt that strange sense of moral detachment from the nation in which he has lived, and in which he has attained the highest place, which is visible in his writings and his career. In both homes he must soon have learned that his name and race placed a certain barrier between him and the distinctions to which he aspired. By a somewhat sweeping and incredible negative, he describes his grandmother as 'so mortified by her social position, that she lived until eighty without indulging a tender expression.' She disliked her race, and was, as Mr. Disraeli himself bears witness, ashamed of the name she bore. Mr. Disraeli deserves only praise for the contrary impulse, which has led him to assert that name and that race against bigoted contempt. Still they set him apart. He was outside the English world; and in spite of his intimate participation in English politics, he has been as a foreigner in them. He has understood them with a sort of external intellect; but he has never thoroughly entered into them, and has cared for them as little on their own account as his father did. Parties and questions have been with him weapons, and not causes. He has written a formal 'Vindication of the British Constitution,' and in the 'Adventures of Captain Popanilla' has composed one of the most caustic satires upon it that have ever appeared. He was the champion of Free Trade in his earlier books, and won party-leadership as the advocate of Protection. He has laughed at our aristocracy—in

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Lothair' he laughs at them still—and has done them homage, denounced them as a Venetian oligarchy, eulogized them as the dignified pillars on which order and liberty rest. He has been a Radical, a Tory-Radical, and a Tory without the Radical, a Conservative, and a Constitutionalist; the client of Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell, the colleague of Lord Salisbury, the Mentor of Lord John Manners, and the chief adviser of the late Lord Derby."*

Isaac D'Israeli died at the age of eighty-two a Christian, and his body was buried in the Church at Hughenden. The mother of the Prime Minister was a Miss Basevi, a lady, in whose veins flowed the bluest of Jewish blood. Like many other great men Lord Beaconsfield was in youth and boyhood somewhat delicate. His intelligence attracted the attention of the poet Rogers, who took him to church and sent him to school. In January last the weekly *Globe* published a very admirable sketch of "the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli," and on this point quoted the *Jewish Chronicle* to the following effect:—

"Some Christians scoff at him as a Jew, with a singular disregard of all they owe to the Jewish race. Now the fact is that Disraeli is neither an apostate nor a Jew. He was born of Hebrew parents, but his father thinking fit to quarrel with the Synagogue failed to teach his child Judaism. One day Rogers, the celebrated banker-poet, happening to visit at Isaac D'Israeli's house at Hackney

*" Political Portraits," pp. 25-30.

when Benjamin was five or six years old, and regretting to find so intelligent a youth without religious instruction, took him to Hackney Church. From this event dates his absolute and complete severance from the Jewish Communion. He became a Christian, and a great genius was lost to us."

How he was put into an attorney's office in the Old Jewery (the attorney being a childless man in a large practice, who wished the son of a friend to come in for his business); how he used to come down to the office with the "Faery Queen" in his pocket; how he took the world by storm with Vivian Grey," while in his nonage; how he was a journalist for sometime, and wrote for the *Representative*; how he wrote novel after novel—all of them with great merit from the point of view, of style and wit, and all of them defective from that of true art; how he wrote poetry at which the world, or rather the few that read it smiled; how he helped his political position by political novels, into which the personal element largely entered; all this is well-known. As in his speeches, so in his novels, he displayed an oriental imagination—a love of gold and gold embroidery—of splendour—with a suspicion of flashiness about it.

Thackeray, whom Bret Harte has followed in his "Sensation Novels Condensed," has well hit off the Byzantine literary style of the Earl of Beaconsfield.

"They entered a moderate-sized apartment—indeed, Holywell street is not above a hundred yards long, and

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this chamber was not more than half that length—and fitted up with *the simple taste* of its owner.

“The carpet was of white velvet (laid over several webs of Aubusson, Ispahan, and Axminster, so that your foot gave no more sound, as it trod upon the yielding plain, than the shadow which followed you), of white velvet painted with flowers, arabesques, and classic figures by Sir William Ross, J. M. W. Turner, R.A., Mrs. Mee, and Paul Delaroche. The edges were wrought with seed pearl, Valenciennes lace and bullion. The walls were hung with cloth of silver, embroidered with gold figures, over which were worked pomegranates, polyanthuses, and passion flowers in ruby, amethyst, and smaragd. The drops of dew which the artificers had sprinkled on the flowers were of diamonds. The hangings were over-hung with pictures yet more costly. Georgione the gorgeous, Titian the golden, Rubens the ruddy and pulpy (the Pan of Painting), some of Murillo’s beatified shepherdesses, who smile on you, out of darkness, like a star; a few score of first-class Leonardos, and fifty of the masterpieces of the patron of Julius and Leo, the imperial genius of Urbino, covered the walls of the *little* chamber. *Divans of carved amber*, covered with ermine, were round the room, and in the midst was a fountain pattering and babbling into jets of double-distilled otto of roses.

“‘Pipes, Goliath!’ Rafael said gaily to a little negro with a silver collar (he spoke to him in his native tongue of Dongola); ‘and welcome to our snuggerly, my Codlingsby.’”

Take the following as a travesty of his descriptive style in another line.

"Her hair had that deep glowing hue in it which has been the delight of all painters, and which, therefore, the vulgar sneer at. It was of burning auburn, meandering over her fairest shoulders in twenty thousand minute ringlets; it hung to her waist and below it. A light-blue velvet fillet, clasped with a diamond aigrette (valued at two hundred thousand toinauns, and bought from Lieutenant Viscovick, who had received it from Dost Mahomed), with a simple bird of paradise formed her head gear. A sea-green cymar, with short sleeves, displayed her exquisitely-moulded arms to perfection, and was fastened by a girdle of emeralds over a yellow satin frock. Pink gauze trousers, spangled with silver, and slippers of the same colour as the band which clasped her ringlets (but so covered with pearls that the original hue of the charming papoosh disappeared entirely), completed her costume. She had three necklaces on, each of which would have dowered a princess; her fingers glittered with rings to their rosy tips; and priceless bracelets, bangles and armlets wound round an arm that was whiter than the ivory grand-piano on which it leaned." Disraeli admitted he had been well burlesqued.

In "Coningsby," paragraphs could be found to match the above. But there are better things in that book and characteristic of better features of Mr. Disraeli's character. The truly great man speaks in the following :—"The two

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years that followed the Reform of the House of Commons are full of instruction on which a young man would do well to ponder. It is hardly possible that he could rise from the study of these annals, without a confirmed disgust for political intrigue, a dazzling practice, apt at first to fascinate youth, for it appeals at once to our invention and our courage, but one which really should only be the resource of the second rate. *Great minds must trust to great truths and great talents for their rise and nothing else.*"

One of the great mistakes made in regard to Mr. Disraeli is to represent him as if he had had no advantages when a young man. He always had a certain amount of independent means to begin with; he was in good London society from the commencement; and the distance between his starting point and the starting point—say of Richard Brinsley Sheridan—was very great. He was a constant visitor at Lady Blessington's when Napoleon III (Prince Louis Bonaparte), Count D'Orsay, the late Lord Lytton, and others frequented her *salon*; and Napoleon and the young Disraeli often talked about their hopes. A story is told that when, many years afterwards, Napoleon and Disraeli, both having been equally successful, met in the drawing room of a tory magnate, they burst out laughing.

I HAVE often regretted I did not note down from time to time the "good things" I heard Mr. Disraeli say, and the "good" stories I heard about him. My memory does not serve me at present for more than is given in this chapter.

I was at the ball given to the Belgian volunteers, some ten years ago, in the Agricultural Hall, Islington. When we were all waiting for our carriages, (my carriage being a modest "hansom,") I noticed Mr. Disraeli who wore a slouched hat and an Inverness cape, with a wing of which he was shielding "his perfect wife" from the draught. The time went slowly by and we had to wait. I observed Mr. Disraeli talking the whole time to his wife who was laughing heartily. I confess I thought this very noble. She was ten years his senior, and she could not supply any new stimulus to his wit. Moreover, for their wives, wits are often very dull. But he clearly set himself to relieve the tediousness of waiting, and he did it effectually.

"Lord Hardwicke's carriage" was called, and Lord Hardwicke came hurrying out, and not knowing Mr. Disraeli in his slouched hat and Inverness cape, pushed him rudely on one side. Lord Hardwicke was a member of the Tory party. Mr. Disraeli took off his hat, and bowing low said, "*I beg your Lordship's pardon.*" It was the best cut I ever heard. Lord Hardwicke's knees knocked together, and he stammered out some excuses Mr. Disraeli affected not to hear.

Mr. Delahunty, an Irish member, was a very rough person, and why he was ever sent across the Channel to disgrace traditions of eloquence, which have never been surpassed, I do not know. But Irishmen like other people sometimes presents insoluble problems. Mr. Delahunty went to one of Mr. Disraeli's receptions, and Mr. Disraeli sought to do the agreeable to him.

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"Be gor Mr. Disraeli," said Mr. Delahunty, "I know you're a fine spaker—but I'm towlt you're also a great literary charakter. Me daughters have read your novels, and be gor! they say they're first rate." "*That is indeed fame,*" said Mr. Disraeli, with a profound bow.

When Mr. Beresford Hope was attacking him as the Asian mystery, Mr. Disraeli, recalling the ancestry and uncouth manners of Mr. Hope, by a single phrase, annihilated him amid the universal laughter of the House. He said there was "a Batavian grace" about all the Honourable Gentleman said, which could not fail to recommend him to the House.

Mr. Roebuck fainted after a great speech on the Crimean war. When the member for Sheffield appeared again in his place, Mr. Disraeli congratulated him, adding that at the time, knowing as he did the great histrionic powers of the Honourable Gentleman, he thought his fainting was a *coup de theatre* to intensify the effect. It was of Mr. Roebuck he said that if a person, who had a right to do so, were to point as that gentleman did, and adopt his tones, it would be offensive; but that such conduct in Mr. Roebuck was ridiculous and contemptible.

Mr. Newcott condemns or "damns," in a parliamentary fashion, by adverse speeches nearly every proposal. Once, after he had made a good speech, Mr. Hardy turned round to Mr. Disraeli and said: "What a pity he has lost his eyes." "Pity," cried Mr. Disraeli, "If he had his eyes, he'd be always damning them."

He hit off Mr. Coleridge (now Lord Coleridge), when that gentleman first entered the Commons, admirably: "Silvery mediocrity;" and we know other hits which paint with the skill of a Reynolds, while they scorch and slay.

How he characterized Sir Robert Peel as a man who "had all along, for thirty or forty years, traded on the ideas of others;" as one whose "life had been one great appropriation clause;" who had "ever been the burglar of other men's intellects;" how he described his speeches as "dreary pages of interminable talk; full of predictions falsified, pledges broken, calculations that had gone wrong, and budgets that had blown up—and this not relieved by a single original thought, a single generous impulse, or a single happy expression;" how he branded his policy as "a system of matter-of-fact, yet so fallacious; taking in everybody, though everybody knew he was taken in; a system so mechanical, yet so Machiævellian, that he could hardly say what it was, except a sort of hum-drum hocus-pocus, in which the order of the day was moved to take in a nation;" how he called on the House of Commons "to dethrone a dynasty of deception, by putting an end to this intolerable yoke of official despotism and parliamentary imposture"—all this is familiar, and a good deal more of the same sort, and from the same immediate quarter.

When Mr. Gladstone was disestablishing the Irish Church, Mr. Bright said that he had often longed for the removal of the gigantic evil, and now the time was come and the man. The clock was stopped that day and just

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at the moment Mr. Gladstone was not in his place. Mr. Disraeli rose and said: "The honourable gentleman says, 'the time is come and the man;' but"—putting up his eye-glass and looking at the clock—"the clock is wrong and the man is not here.

Sir John A. Macdonald has often been compared with the subject of this monograph, and I therefore reproduce the comparison made in 1874.

*Mr. Disraeli and Sir John Macdonald are alike in appearance, and not unlike in genius—and both are men of genius, which is the real source of their popularity and success. Both are the most interesting characters in their respective spheres; both have amazing social gifts; are delightful companions; witty stories abound about both; as debaters, the *forte* of each is sarcasm. At first sight there seems a contrast between the career of both statesmen. But the truth is, there is a great similarity. True, Sir John was in power for twenty years; and Mr. Disraeli out of power for nigh the same time: yet each managed to keep a difficult position by supreme tactical skill. The one a distrusted and envied commoner, without political connections, held the foremost place in the Conservative party in England; the other in a country with a population so various as ours, and amid mutations and struggles, complex and formidable, managed by some marvellous sleight of hand,

*From a lecture on the "English House of Commons" delivered in the Music Hall, Toronto, by N. F. Davin, Nov. 16th, 1874.

whatever happened, to hold the reins. They are both gentlemen, and both have a contempt for personal aggrandizement, being afflicted with that malady which is "the last infirmity of noble minds."

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